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TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:AORG, UN

SUBJECT:UN ADMINISTRATION: ARABIC LANGUAGE COSTS

1. AS USDEL KNOWS, UN 1976-77 PROGRAM BUDGET PROVIDES FOR SHIFT IN FUNDING OF ARABIC LANGUAGE SERVICES IN 1977 FROM VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS BY ARAB STATES TO ASSESSMENT UPON ALL MEMBERS. WE VIEW THIS MOVE AS HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE FOR BUDGETARY REASONS AND POSITIVELY THREATENING IN ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM. WE FORESEE THAT ACCEPTANCE OF ARABIC AS A REGULARLY FUNDED UN WORKING LANGUAGE WILL INCREASE PRESSURES FOR THE ADDITION OF SUCH OTHER LANGUAGES AS PORTUGUESE, SWAHILI, JAPANESE, GERMAN, HINDI AND PERHAPS DUTCH AND ITALIAN. THE CONTINUED PROLIFERATION OF UN WORKING LANGUAGES COULD LEAD TO A VIRTUAL STRANGULATION OF UN PROCESSES AS WELL AS ADDING ENORMOUS EXPENDITURES WITHOUT AN ACCOMPANYING INCREASE IN PROGRAM OUTPUT.

2. ACCORDINGLY, USDEL SHOULD CONSULT ON URGENT BASIS WITH WEO GROUP AND OTHERS TO WHOM CONTINUED VITALITY OF UNITED NATIONS IS IMPORTANT CONCERNING THE IMPLICATIONS AND

DANGERS OF MOVING ARABIC FROM VOLUNTARY TO ASSESSED FUNDING. ON BASIS OF THESE DISCUSSIONS, USDEL SHOULD EVALUATE PROSPECTS OF A JOINT DIPLOMATIC EFFORT BY INTERESTED UN MEMBERS TO PERSUADE ARABS NOT TO INSIST ON ASSESSED FUNDING REVIVING U.S. PROPOSAL THAT EACH MEMBER STATE PAY FOR LANGUAGE SERVICES IT RECEIVES COULD ASSIST IN AVOIDING APPEARANCE OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ARABIC. U.S. GOAL IS TO HALT LANGUAGE PROLIFERATION; IT IS NOT DIRECTED AGAINST ARAB STATES. IN THIS CONNECTION, USDEL WILL RECALL ACTIVE ROLE IT PLAYED LAST YEAR IN ASSURING VOLUNTARY FUNDING OF SELECTIVE UN USE OF GERMAN.

3. USDEL MAY WISH TO DRAW ON FOLLOWING BACKGROUND POINTS AND ON USUN'S A-888, JULY 12, 1974, AND JIU REPORT ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PATTERN OF CONFERENCES (DOCUMENT A/9795, 29TH UNGA):

A. SYG HAS INCLUDED IN UN PROGRAM BUDGET FOR 1976/77 \$3.562 MILLION TO FINANCE COST OF ARABIC LANGUAGE BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 1977. INCLUDES COST OF 100 POSTS.

B. 28TH UNGA (RES. 3190) ADOPTED ARABIC AS OFFICIAL AND WORKING LANGUAGE OF GA AND MAIN COMMITTEES (IN ADDITION

TO CHARTER LANGUAGES -- ENGLISH, FRENCH, SPANISH, RUSSIAN AND CHINESE). ARAB STATES AGREED TO PAY COSTS FOR THREE YEARS. SECURITY COUNCIL AND SEVERAL UNGA SUBSIDIARY BODIES, SUCH AS ECWA, SUBSEQUENTLY ADOPTED ARABIC.

C. U.S. SUPPORTED INTRODUCTION OF ARABIC, SPECIFICALLY NOTING ARAB STATES WILLINGNESS TO PAY COSTS. WE DELIBERATELY DID NOT RECOGNIZE THREE YEAR LIMITATION ON PAYMENTS. IN ANNOUNCING SUPPORT OF ARABIC, U.S. PROPOSED A "PAY FOR WHAT YOU USE" SYSTEM FOR DEFRAYING COSTS OF ALL LANGUAGE SERVICES, INCLUDING ENGLISH.

D. UN DIRECTOR OF CONFERENCE SERVICES AND JIU HAVE WARNED OF DANGER OF COLLAPSE OF CONFERENCE SERVICING CAPABILITY UNDER WEIGHT OF NUMBER AND TIMING OF MEETINGS AND OF DOCUMENTATION WORKLOAD, WITH POINTED REFERENCE TO LANGUAGE SERVICING PROBLEMS.

E. THE GERMAN SPEAKING STATES SOUGHT LAST YEAR TO GET UN DOCUMENTS TRANSLATED INTO GERMAN AT UN EXPENSE. THE U.S. AND THE USSR WEIGHED IN AND THE GERMAN STATES AGREED TO PAY ALL COSTS WITHOUT A TIME LIMITATION.

F. THE U.S. POSITION WAS, AND REMAINS UNCHANGED, THAT WE WILL BE NO HARDER ON THE GERMANS THAN ON THE ARABS AND THAT WE WILL SEEK TO HAVE THE ARABS CONTINUE TO PAY ARABIC LANGUAGE COSTS.

G. ARABIC IS THE TIP OF THE PROVERBIAL ICEBERG. OTHER LANGUAGE GROUPS (AN AFRICAN LANGUAGE, HINDI AND JAPANESE ALREADY HAVE SURFACED) ARE INTERESTED IN HAVING THEIR LANGUAGES ADOPTED FOR USE IN THE UN AND CAN MAKE STRONG CASES. WE VIEW ABSORPTION OF ARABIC COSTS IN ASSESSED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BUDGET AS WEDGE FOR OTHER LANGUAGES, THE ADDED COSTS FOR SOME OF WHICH WOULD NOT EVEN BE COVERED BY THE FULL ASSESSED CONTRIBUTIONS OF USER STATES. ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS OF FURTHER LANGUAGE PROLIFERATION ALSO SUBJECT OF SERIOUS CONCERN. WE CONTINUE TO FAVOR SYSTEM UNDER WHICH LANGUAGE COSTS WOULD BE PRORATED AMONG USERS OF EACH LANGUAGE, INCLUDING ENGLISH.

H. THE ARAB STATES CURRENTLY PAY ONLY .84 PERCENT OF BUDGET. THEIR COMBINED ASSESSMENTS, UNDER THE CURRENT UN SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS, WOULD FALL ALMOST ONE HALF MILLION DOLLARS SHORT OF DEFRAYING ARABIC LANGUAGE COSTS IN 1977, (SEE DETAILS IN TABLE DATAFAXED STOTTLEMYER, OCTOBER 9). THE ARABS WOULD BE CONTRIBUTING NOTHING TO PROGRAMS, PERSONNEL COSTS, RENT, HEAT, AIR CONDITIONING, ETC.

I. ARABIC CANNOT BE JUSTIFIED ON THE BASIS OF POPULATION
(SEE POPULATION DATA IN TABLE DATAFAXED STOTTLEMYER).

4. IF RESULTS OF USDEL CONSULTATIONS OFFER PROSPECT OF
SUCCESS, WE ARE PREPARED TO CONSIDER DEMARCHES IN CAPITALS
IN ASSOCIATION WITH OTHER INTERESTED UN MEMBERS, ALTHOUGH
THIS WILL HAVE TO BE WEIGHED IN THE CONTEXT OF OTHER
ISSUES ON OUR AGENDA IN EACH CAPITAL AND IN NEW YORK. KISSINGER

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